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SUPPORT BY THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM OF THE EFFORTS OF GOVERNMENTS TO PROMOTE AND CONSOLIDATE NEW OR RESTORED DEMOCRACIES

Letter dated 17 December 1996 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the General Assembly

On 7 December 1994, the General Assembly, following receipt of the Plan of Action adopted by the Second International Conference of New and Restored Democracies in Managua, requested me to report on ways and mechanisms through which the United Nations system could support the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies (resolution 49/30). In response, I presented a report on this topic to the Assembly (A/50/332 and Corr.1).

The General Assembly welcomed this report, and requested me to present to it at the fifty-first session a report on my work to improve the capacity of the United Nations to respond effectively to the requests of Member States in their efforts to achieve the goal of democratization, which would include "innovative ways and means, as well as other reflections, to enable the Organization to respond effectively and in an integrated manner to requests of Member States for assistance" in this field (resolution 50/133). I presented a respondent report to the General Assembly earlier this year (A/51/512).

With the present letter, I am transmitting a supplement to my two earlier reports, which presents my further thoughts in answer to the General Assembly's request. I should be grateful if you would circulate this text as a document of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 41.

(Signed) Boutros BOUTROS-GHALI

96-37160 (E) 241296 271296

ANNEX

Supplement to reports on democratization

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I. INTRODUCTION: DEMOCRATIZATION AND DEMOCRACY

1. Democratization is a process which leads to a more open, more participatory, less authoritarian society. Democracy is a system of government which embodies, in a variety of institutions and mechanisms, the ideal of political power based on the will of the people.

2. In places from Latin America to Africa, Europe and Asia, numbers of authoritarian regimes have given way to democratic forces, increasingly responsive governments and increasingly open societies. Many States and their peoples have embarked upon a process of democratization for the first time. Others have moved to restore their democratic roots.

3. The basic idea of democracy is today gaining adherents across cultural, social and economic lines. While the definition of democracy is an increasingly important subject of debate within and among societies, the practice of democracy is increasingly regarded as essential to progress on a wide range of human concerns and to the protection of human rights.

4. Both democratization and democracy raise difficult questions of prioritization and timing. It is therefore not surprising that the acceleration of democratization and the renaissance of the idea of democracy have met with some resistance. On the practical level, the world has seen some slowing and erosion in democratization processes and, in some cases, reversals. On the normative level, resistance has arisen which in some cases seeks to cloak authoritarianism in claims of cultural differences and in others reflects the undeniable fact that there is no one model of democratization or democracy suitable to all societies. The reality is that individual societies decide if and when to begin democratization. Throughout the process, each society decides its nature and its pace. The starting point from which a society commences democratization will bear greatly on such decisions. Like the process of democratization, democracy can take many forms and evolve through many phases, depending on the particular characteristics and circumstances of societies. And, in every society, the persistence of democracy itself requires an ongoing process of political renewal and development.

5. The phenomenon of democratization has had a marked impact on the United Nations. Just as newly independent States turned to the United Nations for support during the era of decolonization, so today, following another wave of accessions to statehood and political independence, Member States are turning to the United Nations for support in democratization. While this has been most visible in the requests for electoral assistance received since 1989 from more than 60 States - nearly one third of the Organization's membership - virtually no area of United Nations activity has been left untouched. The peacekeeping mandates entrusted to the United Nations now often include both the restoration of democracy and the protection of human rights. United Nations departments, agencies and programmes have been called upon to help States draft constitutions, create independent systems for the administration of justice, provide police forces that respect and enforce the rule of law, de-politicize military establishments and establish national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights. They also have been asked by many States

engaged in democratization to help encourage and facilitate the active participation of citizens in political processes, and to foster the emergence of a productive civil society, including responsible and independent communications media.

6. These operational activities were the subject of a report requested of the Secretary-General by the General Assembly in its resolution 49/30 of 7 December 1994. My report, "Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies" (A/50/332 and Corr.1), was presented to the Assembly on 7 August 1995. The General Assembly welcomed my report in its resolution 50/133 of 20 December 1995 and requested me to prepare a second report on the same subject, which I accordingly presented on 18 October 1996 (A/51/512). Beyond operational assistance, there is a growing interest among Member States in the democratization of the United Nations itself. At the Special Commemorative Meeting of the General Assembly held from 22 to 24 October 1995 on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, nearly every speaker, including 128 heads of State or Government, addressed this important issue.

7. Reflecting on these realities - the fact of democratization, the request for United Nations involvement and the interest in widening the scope of democratization - I believe the time has come for a deeper consideration of the idea in all its ramifications and possibilities. I discern four components of such an attempt: an emerging consensus on democracy and its practical importance; the foundation for United Nations concern with democratization and the role envisaged for it; the new momentum for, and the resultant expansion in, United Nations support for democratization; and a new dimension of this support - democratization at the international level.

8. I offer the present paper in the hope that it may deepen understanding of United Nations efforts in favour of democratization and intensify debate on future international action in this area. To address the subjects of democratization and democracy does not imply a change in the respect that the United Nations vows for the sovereignty of States or in the principle of non-intervention in internal affairs set out in Article 2, paragraph 7, of the Charter of the United Nations. To the contrary, the founding Purposes and Principles of the United Nations are the very basis of the present reflection.

9. The United Nations is not alone in supporting democratization. The past decade has brought a proliferation of actors engaged in this effort, which has fast become a massive global enterprise. These actors include international and regional intergovernmental organizations; individual States; parliamentarians; non-governmental organizations from the local to the global levels; and private actors such as legal professionals, the media, academics, private institutions and civic associations, including ethnic, cultural and religious groups. Taken together, they represent a vast spectrum of perspectives, expertise, approaches and techniques. The consideration of democratization offered in the present paper focuses on the United Nations as one such actor, albeit unique in character. Thus, from the outset, it is essential to be clear about the particular aim and distinct role of the United Nations in democratization.

10. The United Nations is, by design and definition, universal and impartial. While democratization is a new force in world affairs, and while democracy can and should be assimilated by all cultures and traditions, it is not for the United Nations to offer a model of democratization or democracy or to promote democracy in a specific case. Indeed, to do so could be counter-productive to the process of democratization which, in order to take root and to flourish, must derive from the society itself. Each society must be able to choose the form, pace and character of its democratization process. Imposition of foreign models not only contravenes the Charter principle of non-intervention in internal affairs, it may also generate resentment among both the Government and the public, which may in turn feed internal forces inimical to democratization and to the idea of democracy.

11. Therefore, the United Nations does not aim to persuade democratizing States to apply external models or borrow extraneous forms of government. Rather, the United Nations aims to help each State pursue its own particular path. Understanding democratization as a process calling for wide-ranging action, the United Nations aims to support democratizing States in a variety of processes and experiences. Its role in favour of democratization in a particular State is understood and carried out as one of assistance and advice.

12. The United Nations possesses a foundation and a responsibility to serve its Member States in democratization, yet it must receive a formal request before it can assist Member States in their democratization processes. United Nations activities and responsibilities in the area of democratization thus parallel and complement those in development: to provide and help coordinate assistance to those who request it, and to seek a strengthened context in which those requesting and those responding may achieve success.

13. Democratization is predominantly a new area for technical assistance. Traditionally, technical assistance has been provided in the context of economic and social development, with the main emphasis on building and strengthening physical infrastructure and the executive arm of the Government; assistance in governance beyond that was made virtually impossible by the political climate throughout most of the United Nations history. While the United Nations still provides technical assistance in those areas, the wave of economic and political transitions witnessed in the post-cold-war period has led Member States to reorient their requests for technical assistance towards areas more relevant to democratization, broadly defined.

14. The United Nations strengthens the context for support to democratization through information-gathering and awareness-raising and by offering Member States and the wider international community a universally legitimate global forum for dialogue, debate and consensus-building. Through the United Nations, multilateral agreements can be reached - whether embodied in the form of non-binding norms, internationally recognized standards or binding obligations - which help to define a common political and legal framework for action. Indeed, it is to a certain extent through the forum of the United Nations that a consensus on democracy and its practical importance has begun to take shape.

II. AN EMERGING CONSENSUS

15. Over the last half-century, the meaning of democracy has shifted considerably in world affairs. In 1945, democracy was a clear concept as defined by the Allied nations in opposition to fascism. With the onset of the cold war, democracy came to be propounded from two perspectives, East and West. As the third world took its place on the international stage, its members strove to find their own methods of government, appropriate to their needs, providing in the process alternative perspectives on democracy. Today, the rapidly changing global scene has set the age-old concept of democracy in a new light. While differences in the economic, social, cultural and historical circumstances of the world's societies mean that differences will continue between democracy as viewed by one society and democracy as viewed by another, democracy is increasingly being recognized as a response to a wide range of human concerns and as essential to the protection of human rights.

16. This is not to say that democracy is without its detractors. In some quarters, the charge is made that there can be no democracy in times of trouble or war, that democracy itself leads to disorder, that democracy diminishes efficiency, that democracy violates minority and community rights, and that democracy must wait until development is fully achieved. However, whatever evidence critics of democracy can find in support of these claims must not be allowed to conceal a deeper truth: democracy contributes to preserving peace and security, securing justice and human rights, and promoting economic and social development.

17. Democratic institutions and processes channel competing interests into arenas of discourse and provide means of compromise which can be respected by all participants in debates, thereby minimizing the risk that differences or disputes will erupt into armed conflict or confrontation. Because democratic Governments are freely chosen by their citizens and held accountable through periodic and genuine elections and other mechanisms, they are more likely to promote and respect the rule of law, respect individual and minority rights, cope effectively with social conflict, absorb migrant populations and respond to the needs of marginalized groups. They are therefore less likely to abuse their power against the peoples of their own State territories. Democracy within States thus fosters the evolution of the social contract upon which lasting peace can be built. In this way, a culture of democracy is fundamentally a culture of peace.

18. Democratic institutions and processes within States may likewise be conducive to peace among States. The accountability and transparency of democratic Governments to their own citizens, who understandably may be highly cautious about war, as it is they who will have to bear its risks and burdens, may help to restrain recourse to military conflict with other States. The legitimacy conferred upon democratically elected Governments commands the respect of the peoples of other democratic States and fosters expectations of negotiation, compromise and the rule of law in international relations. When States sharing a culture of democracy are involved in a dispute, the transparency of their regimes may help to prevent accidents, avoid reactions based on emotion or fear and reduce the likelihood of surprise attack.

19. Lacking the legitimacy or real support offered by free elections, authoritarian Governments all too often have recourse to intimidation and violence in order to suppress internal dissent. They tend to reject institutions such as a free press and an independent judiciary which provide the transparency and accountability necessary to discourage such governmental manipulation of citizens. The resulting atmosphere of oppression and tension, felt in neighbouring countries, can heighten the fear of war. It is for this reason that the Charter declares that one of the first purposes of the United Nations is "to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace".[1] Threatened by the resentment of their own people, non-democratic Governments may also be more likely to incite hostilities against other States in order to justify their suppression of internal dissent or forge a basis for national unity.

20. It is true that the introduction of democratic practices into formerly authoritarian or war-torn States may contribute to civil conflict by opening channels for free expression, including the expression of hatred. Free and fair elections can be followed by the suppression of those defeated. There is also a danger that strengthening civil society without also addressing State capacity may undermine governability or overwhelm the State. Especially for Governments in underdeveloped countries, which are typically engaged full time in the provision of basic human needs for their populations, the risks to stability that may arise in the early stages of democratization may make them reluctant to continue democratization or even to begin the process at all.

21. These difficult questions of prioritization and timing suggest several important lessons. First and foremost, it is essential that each State itself decide the form, pace and character of its democratization process. This suggests a fundamental prerequisite for democratization: the existence of a State which is able and is willing not only to create the conditions for free and fair elections, but also to support the development and maintenance of the institutions necessary for the ongoing practice of democratic politics. Second, democratization must begin with an effort to create a culture of democracy - a political culture, which is fundamentally non-violent and in which no one party or group expects to win or lose all the time. Such a culture is built upon a societal consensus not about policy, but about the process and framework of democratic political life: that the will of the people is the basis of governmental authority; that all individuals have a right to take part in government; that there shall be periodic and genuine elections; that power changes hands through popular suffrage rather than intimidation or force; that political opponents and minorities have a right to express their views; and that there can be loyal and legal opposition to the Government in power. Third, democratization must seek to achieve institutional balance between the State and civil society. Finally, support for democratization must be coupled with support for development in order that socio-economic as well as civil and political rights are respected. Although development can take place without democracy, there is no evidence that the breakthrough to development requires an authoritarian regime. There is, however, ample evidence suggesting that, over the long term, democracy is an ingredient for both sustainable development and lasting peace. Moreover, the globalization of economic activity and communications has generated pressures for democratization and human rights.

22. In today's world, freedom of thought, the impetus to creativity and the will to involvement are all critical to economic, social and cultural progress, and they are best fostered and protected within democratic systems. In this sense, the economic act of privatization can be as well a political act, enabling greater human creativity and participation. The best way to cultivate a citizen's readiness to participate in the development of his or her country, to arouse that person's energy, imagination and commitment, is by recognizing and respecting human dignity and human rights. The material means of progress can be acquired, but human resources - skilled, spirited and inventive workers - are indispensable, as is the enrichment found through mutual dialogue and the free interchange of ideas. In this way, a culture of democracy, marked by communication, dialogue and openness to the ideas and activities of the world, helps to foster a culture of development.

23. Democracy is not an affirmation of the individual at the expense of the community; it is through democracy that individual and collective rights, the rights of persons and the rights of peoples, can be reconciled. Many different balances can be struck between the rights of individuals and the rights of the community within the context of democratic politics. Democratic processes are the most reliable way to ensure that these balances are genuinely reflective of a people's broader culture, which, in every society, must itself serve as the ballast for the healthy functioning of democracy.

24. Democracy today is receiving widespread acknowledgement for its capacity to foster good governance, which is perhaps the single most important development variable within the control of individual States. By providing legitimacy for government and encouraging people's participation in decision-making on the issues that affect their lives, democratic processes contribute to the effectiveness of State policies and development strategies. Democratic institutions and practices foster the governmental accountability and transparency necessary to deter national and transnational crime and corruption and encourage increased responsiveness to popular concerns. In development, they increase the likelihood that State goals reflect broad societal concerns and that government is sensitive to the societal and environmental costs of its development policies.

25. Non-democratic States over time tend to generate conditions inimical to development: politicized military rule; a weak middle class; a population constrained to silence; prohibitions on travel; censorship; restrictions on the practice of religion or imposition of religious obligations; and pervasive and often institutionalized corruption. Without democratic institutions to channel popular pressures for development and reform, popular unrest and instability will result. The reality is that no State can long remain just or free, and thus also have the potential to pursue a successful and sustainable development strategy, if its citizens are prohibited from participating actively and substantially in its political processes and economic, social and cultural development. Increasingly, it is from this perspective that democracy is being seen today - as a practical necessity.

III. THE FOUNDATION FOR ACTION

26. The consensus that is currently taking shape on the practical importance of democracy finds the United Nations well placed to respond to the requests of its Member States for assistance in democratization.

27. At the time of the United Nations founding in 1945, as the Second World War was drawing to a close, the overriding aim was to prevent the recurrence of global conflict. With the creation of the United Nations, the founders began a second experiment in democratic international organization, building upon the League of Nations and the logic of its Covenant, framed in the aftermath of the First World War. The Covenant had been intended to guard against the dangers of thwarted nationalism through respect for self-determination; to transcend the dangerous reliance on power balances through a shared system of security; to reverse the arms race through disarmament; and to replace secret treaties with open, international diplomacy. Democracy within and among States was understood as the binding element of these efforts. It would preserve the sovereignty and political independence of nations, by allowing individuals to exercise their fundamental right to political participation, and of peoples, by allowing them to exercise their fundamental right to self-determination. It would foster State participation in democratic international organizations and processes and in collective security arrangements. It would also encourage respect for the rule of law within and among States. The same understanding of democracy underpins the Charter of the United Nations. Within the original framework of the Charter, democracy was understood as essential to efforts to prevent future aggression, and to support the sovereign State as the basic guarantor of human rights, the basic mechanism for solving national problems and the basic element of a peaceful and cooperative international system.

28. The word "democracy" does not appear in the Charter. However, with the opening words of that document, "We the Peoples of the United Nations", the founders invoked the most fundamental principle of democracy, rooting the sovereign authority of the Member States, and thus the legitimacy of the Organization which they were to compose, in the will of their peoples. The Charter offers a vision of democratic States and democracy among them that both derives from and aims to realize the founders' "faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small".[2] Their commitment to democracy shows in the stated Purposes of the United Nations to promote respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples[3] and for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without discrimination.[4] It is further revealed in the stated Principle of the United Nations that "the Organization is based on the principle of the sovereign equality of its Members".[5]

29. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted unanimously by the General Assembly in 1948,[6] elaborates upon this original commitment to democracy. The Universal Declaration proclaims the right of all individuals to take part in government, to have equal access to public service, and to vote and be elected. It further states that "the will of the people shall be the basis of authority of government", and that "this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures".[7] It also

declares the right to equality before the law, to freedom of opinion and expression, and to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.

30. The Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, adopted by the General Assembly in 1960,[9] strongly reaffirmed the right of all peoples to self-determination and declared that, "by virtue of that right [all peoples] freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development".[9] The Declaration also called for "immediate steps" to "be taken, in Trust and Non-Self-Governing Territories or all other territories which have not yet attained independence, to transfer all powers to the peoples of those Territories, without any conditions or reservations, in accordance with their freely expressed will and desire, without any distinction as to race, creed or colour, in order to enable them to enjoy complete independence and freedom".[10]

31. Taken together, these three primary documents, the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, provide a clear and solid foundation for a United Nations role and responsibility in democratization.

32. Soon after the birth of the Organization, however, the onset of the cold war effectively truncated United Nations support for its Member States in democratization. On one side of the global ideological confrontation were States which claimed to have peace and democracy at home, and which supported peoples' calls for self-determination and democratization abroad. Yet those States often misappropriated the name of democracy and acted in drastically undemocratic ways. On the other side were States which endeavoured to maintain peace and democracy at home and to promote those objectives within other States. Yet those States often supported authoritarian regimes, on the grounds that those regimes opposed communism and defended market freedoms, or used non-democratic means to achieve their foreign policy goals. The actions of both sides seemed to suggest a belief that peace and democracy within States could be achieved by war and non-democracy among States.

33. The cold war thus interrupted the project of democratic international organization begun by the founders. Throughout the decades of this confrontation, many of the major decisions of international peace and security were taken outside the United Nations and managed within the context of a non-democratic system, the bipolar system. The principle of self-determination was usurped and manipulated. International law became a casualty. The bright prospects for democracy within and among States soon faded to a faint glow.

34. Nonetheless, during that time the United Nations was active in keeping international organization alive, in promoting and facilitating decolonization, in easing the transition of newly independent peoples into the international State system, in promoting economic and social development, in building human rights machinery and in defending international law. The principle of self-determination was reaffirmed not only in the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples but also in the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,[11] which both entered into force in 1976, the latter Covenant making clear

that economic, social and cultural rights stand on an equal basis with civil and political rights. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in its article 25 reaffirmed and made binding respect for the right of all individuals to take part in public affairs, to vote and be elected in periodic and genuine elections, and to have equal access to public service. It did the same for other basic human rights critical to the achievement of genuine electoral processes and democratic government, such as freedom of expression, of information, of assembly, of association and movement, and freedom from intimidation.

35. The foundation for a United Nations role in democratization was thus fortified even during the global contest of the cold war. As the era of super-Power confrontation was coming to an end and the drive for democratization gained momentum, there emerged a fresh prospect for the pursuit of the Charter's original goals, and for offering assistance in democratization.

IV. AN EVOLVING UNITED NATIONS ROLE

36. The new acclaim for democracy and growing recognition of United Nations potential in democratization have been reflected most obviously in the General Assembly's increased attention in recent years to enhancing the effectiveness of the principle of periodic and genuine elections. In its resolutions on this matter, which has appeared annually on its agenda since 1988, the Assembly has reasserted the foundation for a United Nations role in democratization by explicitly reaffirming the relevant principles, purposes and rights articulated in the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. In a related series of resolutions on respect for the principles of national sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of States in their electoral processes, the Assembly has explicitly recalled its resolution containing the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

37. The General Assembly also has placed a dual emphasis on democracy as an ideal and as an essential ingredient for progress. In its resolution 43/157 of 8 December 1988, reaffirming that the will of the people, expressed in periodic and genuine elections, shall be the basis of authority of government, the General Assembly stressed that, "as a matter of practical experience, the right of everyone to take part in the government of his or her country is a crucial factor in the effective enjoyment of a wide range of other human rights and fundamental freedoms, embracing political, economic, social, and cultural rights".

38. This series of General Assembly resolutions, together with the respondent reports submitted by myself and other relevant United Nations entities, illustrates the ongoing process of dialogue, assessment, debate and reform in the area of electoral assistance that has emerged in response to the rising tide of interest in democratization and requests for United Nations support. This process has been influenced and received added impetus from the dialogue taking place in international conferences, particularly the World Conference on Human Rights, which was convened by the United Nations in Vienna in June 1993, and the First and Second International Conferences of New or Restored Democracies, held respectively at Manila in June 1988, with 13 countries participating, and at Managua in July 1994, with 74 countries participating. The result has been the establishment of a Focal Point for Electoral Assistance Requests within the United Nations Department of Political Affairs, along with an Electoral Assistance Division; the establishment of various trust funds for electoral assistance; the creation of a global Electoral Assistance Information Network, coordinated by the Electoral Assistance Division, in which an increasing number of intergovernmental, non-governmental and private organizations are participating; and, on the operational level, the refinement of procedures and design of new approaches to electoral assistance.

39. The evolution of this reform process in the electoral field has coincided with a major reorientation of Member States' requests for technical assistance in institution-building, evident in the expanding interest of the United Nations agencies and programmes in the social dimension of development and in the question of governance. The scope of requests for assistance made by Member States has broadened, and now encompasses assistance provided before, during and

after the holding of elections in order to "ensure the continuation and consolidation of democratization processes in Member States requesting assistance".[12]

40. It is on the availability of such assistance from the United Nations system, and following on a request made in the Managua Plan of Action,[13] that the General Assembly requested me to prepare the 7 August 1995 report, "Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies".[14] That report, as well as the 18 October 1996 report of the same title,[15] details the range of available assistance, from assistance in the creation of a political culture in which democratization can take root, to assistance in democratic elections, to assistance in building institutions which support democratization.

41. The reports emphasize that democratization must have indigenous support if it is to take root within a society. The United Nations assists Member States in building such support by helping to promote a culture of democracy. With its impartiality and universal legitimacy, and its Charter-based purpose of promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, the United Nations is uniquely placed to provide such assistance.

42. Assistance in creating a culture of democracy can take many forms and often is provided in the context of electoral assistance, although it is and need not be limited to that context. In Cambodia (1993) and El Salvador (1994), the United Nations helped the parties to conduct a fair electoral campaign - free from partisan intimidation - through diplomacy, civic education programmes and efforts to ensure fair access to the media. In Mozambique (1994), the United Nations has helped transform the Resistência Nacional de Moçambique (RENAMO) into a political party and facilitated the country's transition from a one-party to a multi-party system. In many other countries around the world, United Nations programmes for the return of refugees and displaced persons to their home territories constitute a major contribution to the re-creation of a polity within which democratization may be seriously contemplated.

43. Support for a culture of democracy has proved critical to success in holding free and fair elections in which all actors in society - government officials, political leaders, parliamentarians, judicial officials, police and military forces and individual citizens - play their accorded roles. Moreover, it has proved critical to ensuring that electoral results are respected and that there is widespread support among all actors for the continued practice of democratic politics beyond a first referendum or election. In this regard, should a political stalemate or crisis at some point occur which threatens to derail the democratization process or to interrupt the practice of democratic politics, the United Nations should be ready to serve as a neutral and confidential mediator to try to facilitate a peaceful and satisfying resolution of the dispute. The request of the parties concerned is a prerequisite.

44. This same emphasis on the continuation and consolidation of democratization processes has guided the United Nations refinement of procedures and design of new approaches in the field of electoral assistance, although the purpose of elections themselves must not be to decide on whether or not democratization will go forward but to elect a legitimate Government. The United Nations offers

electoral assistance which aims to build both confidence in democratic political processes and long-term national capacity to conduct periodic and genuine elections. The United Nations endeavours to help States construct an electoral process and an electoral infrastructure using appropriate technology. Where possible, it assists in the creation of a national network for electoral observation, which encourages the participation of national political parties and non-governmental organizations and thereby strengthens simultaneously national capacity and the base of support for continued democratization.

45. Beyond fostering a culture of democracy and holding democratic elections lies the evident and crucial need to prepare, and to continually renew and strengthen, the institutional ground in which democratization can take shape. The United Nations provides a wide variety of assistance in this area, encompassing much of its operational work in development and human rights, and focusing on both State institutions and the institutions of civil society. As stressed in my two reports, the United Nations offers assistance in institution-building for democratization that encompasses far more than helping Member States to create democratic structures of government, or to strengthen existing ones. United Nations assistance in institution-building also involves helping to improve accountability and transparency, to build national capacity and to reform the civil service - in a word, good governance. It involves institutional support for the rule of law, in which United Nations departments, agencies and programmes help States to reform and strengthen legal and judicial systems, to build human rights institutions, including those of a humanitarian character, to create police and military forces respectful of human rights and the rule of law, to provide police forces that enforce the rule of law and to depoliticize military establishments. Finally, United Nations assistance in this area involves institution-building for social development, such as helping to create independent trade unions or to promote the full integration of women into all aspects of political, social, cultural and economic life - a task of particular importance to the consolidation of democratization.

46. The entire range of United Nations assistance, from support for a culture of democracy to assistance in institution-building for democratization, may well be understood as a key component of peace-building. Peace-building is a new approach which emphasizes that in order to achieve lasting peace, the effort to prevent, control and resolve conflicts must include action to address the underlying economic, social, cultural, humanitarian and political roots of conflict and to strengthen the foundations for development.

47. The proliferation of actors engaged in such activities supporting democratization has on the whole been a positive trend. Requesting States and their peoples, which themselves represent a wide diversity of circumstances, characteristics and priorities, are being offered a rich variety of perspectives, capacities, approaches and techniques from which to choose. Yet with this proliferation of actors and activity there also comes the risk of confusion, waste and duplication of effort. As in the field of development, the United Nations today can help to rationalize and harmonize the multiplicity of public and private efforts worldwide in the field of democratization.

48. To illustrate, in cases where the United Nations has been entrusted with a peacemaking or peacekeeping mandate to help bring about national reconciliation

and democratic consolidation, the establishment of informal, ad hoc groups of States to support the United Nations in that effort has served to harmonize diplomatic initiatives and to achieve, among other aims, a coordinated approach in promoting a culture of democracy. Such has been the case, for example, with the "Friends of the Secretary-General for El Salvador", the "Friends of the Secretary-General for Guatemala" and the "Friends of the Secretary-General for Haiti", where the United Nations and the Organization of American States have deployed a joint civilian human rights mission.

49. In electoral assistance, lack of coordination among international actors risks far more than waste and duplication. Conflicting advice from technical consultants, over-funding of or inordinate attention to particular electoral components to the detriment of others, and lack of unity in assessments by electoral observers, whether made before, during or after an election, are all possible results. Each can carry potentially severe consequences for the overall electoral effort.

50. The United Nations Focal Point for Electoral Assistance Requests, the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, helps to ensure coordination among the primary United Nations units active in the electoral field. Among all international actors in the electoral field, coordination is served by ongoing United Nations activities, such as the maintenance of the global Electoral Assistance Information Network, the publication and dissemination of guidelines and handbooks on electoral assistance, and the convening of workshops and seminars with various governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental partners of the United Nations in electoral assistance. On the operational level, the United Nations can provide an umbrella framework for communication and coordination. Where possible, the United Nations has fostered joint operations with regional intergovernmental organizations. Such field cooperation has brought positive results for the requesting States, assisting organizations and relevant donors, and bodes well for enhanced coordination in the future.

51. In institution-building for democratization, the task of coordination among international actors is substantially more complex and difficult than in the electoral field. Institution-building for democratization not only involves a far larger and more diverse group of actors; it is a newer and wider area of international activity which, unlike electoral assistance, lacks a precise organizational focus. Coordination of international actors is essential to avoid waste and duplication and, more importantly, to avoid conflicting advice from technical consultants, programmes working at cross purposes and over-funding of or inordinate attention to particular aspects of the democratization process to the detriment of others; the last could lead in turn to an imbalance between the capacities of State and civic institutions. Any or all of these results could undermine the overall effort to consolidate democratization.

52. The United Nations is well placed to facilitate coordination among international actors engaged in institution-building for democratization. The United Nations maintains a global network of regional economic and social commissions and country offices. The global mandate of the United Nations spans economic, social, security, political, humanitarian and human rights issues, which is why the United Nations is active across virtually the full range of

issues relevant to democratization and can help integrate these issues into a wider effort linking peacekeeping, refugee assistance, relief efforts, reconstruction and development. Finally, the United Nations itself accounts for many of the international actors engaged in institution-building for democratization.

53. The United Nations serves coordination in institution-building by strengthening coordination within its own organizational framework and within the United Nations system as a whole. The Administrative Committee on Coordination, chaired by the Secretary-General and composed of the executive heads of all the United Nations programmes and specialized agencies, including the Bretton Woods institutions, works to foster an effective division of labour within the United Nations system and to promote joint initiatives towards common objectives. An important part of this effort is the United Nations resident coordinator system, designed to promote effective coordination among all economic and social actors at the country level. In the context of peacekeeping, this coordinating role is fulfilled by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in command of the operation. This coordination effort within the United Nations system already allows for and encourages the participation of non-United Nations actors, both governmental and non-governmental. Through this effort can be developed an expanding network for information-sharing, policy development and programme cooperation in democratization support. In this context, post-election needs-assessment missions aimed at recommending programmes that might contribute to democratic consolidation could be a useful basis for formulating coordinated approaches and joint initiatives among international actors. Such missions are now offered by the United Nations Electoral Assistance Division in accordance with General Assembly resolution 48/131 of 20 December 1993.

54. For the United Nations, the task of fostering communication and coordination among international actors in democratization assistance goes hand in hand with the effort to strengthen the international context for such assistance. Towards this end, the convening of international conferences has proved to be an effective mechanism.

55. With the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held at Rio de Janeiro in June 1992, the United Nations began a series of international conferences that have brought together not only all States, but also relevant non-governmental organizations and other representatives of civil society to focus on interlocking economic and social issues by considering their impact on the human person and human communities. At Rio, the focus was on sustainable development and the necessity for a new and equitable partnership among all States, developed and developing, and between government and civil society at all levels. At Vienna (June 1993), the world turned its attention to human rights and, in particular, to the mutually reinforcing relationship between democracy, development and the respect for human rights. At Cairo (September 1994), the focus was on population and development, linking demographic change to development policies. At Copenhagen (March 1995), the age-old problems of poverty, unemployment and social disintegration were considered as global problems requiring global attention. At Beijing (September 1995), the advancement of women was discussed as a key to progress in the search for equality, development and peace. At Midrand, South Africa

(May 1996), trade and development were addressed in the context of globalization and liberalization, and at Istanbul (June 1996), the focus was on human settlements and the problems of development in cities.

56. Taken together, these conferences evidence an emerging global consensus on democracy itself and, more clearly, on an array of issues directly and indirectly relevant to democratization. This consensus is being translated into international norms, agreements and specific commitments, integrated by Member States into national priorities and supported by the United Nations and others through operational activities.

57. Through international conferences and in other ways, such as the resumed fiftieth session of the General Assembly on public administration and development (15-19 April 1996), the United Nations fosters a supportive international environment for democratizing States - and, indeed, for all democracies, new and long-established - which encourages consolidation of democratization while helping to guard against erosion, reversal or abandonment of democratic politics.

58. Yet, the objective to create a supportive international environment for democracy and democratizing States requires expanded effort. If the new phenomenon of democratization within States is to be fully understood, and its progress certainly advanced, it must be considered in its full international context.

59. This means recognizing, as in 1945, the positive relationship between democracy and the functioning of the international system. The logic of the Charter is today made manifest as United Nations support for democratization helps to prevent aggression and to foster the construction and maintenance of viable and independent States as the basic guarantors of human rights, the basic mechanisms for solving national problems and the basic elements of a peaceful and cooperative international system.

60. This relationship has evolved since 1945. The reality of globalization and the new world environment now require democratization at the international level, so that democratization within States can take root, so that the problems brought on by globalization which affect all States may be more effectively solved and so that a new, stable and equitable international system can be constructed in place of the bipolar system so recently swept away.

V. DEMOCRATIZATION AT THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

61. Democratization internationally is necessary on three interrelated fronts. The established system of the United Nations itself has far to go before fulfilling to the extent possible the democratic potential of its present design, and in transforming those structures which are insufficiently democratic. The participation of new actors on the international scene is an acknowledged fact; providing them with agreed means of participation in the formal system, heretofore primarily the province of States, is a new task of our time. A third challenge will be to achieve a culture of democracy internationally. This will not only require a society of States committed to democratic principles and processes; it will also demand an enlarged international civil society deeply involved in democratic institutions, whether State, inter-State or supra-State, private or quasi-private; committed to democratic practices, procedures and political pluralism; and composed of peoples ingrained with those habits of openness, fairness and tolerance that have been associated with democracy since ancient times.

62. There are of course substantial differences between democratization at the international level and democratization within States. At the international level there are international organizations and institutions, and international decision-making and international law, but there is no international structure equivalent to that of State government. International society is both a society of States and a society of individual persons. Nonetheless, the concept of democratization as a process which can create a more open, more participatory, less authoritarian society applies both nationally and internationally.

63. There are likewise substantial differences between the ideas of national democracy and international democracy. Growing recognition of the practical importance of democracy within States has nevertheless contributed to growing recognition of the practical importance of democracy among States and generated increased demand for democratization internationally.

64. Individual involvement in the political process enhances the accountability and responsiveness of government. Governments which are responsive and accountable are likely to be stable and to promote peace. Many internal conflicts stem from the belief, justified or not, that the State does not represent all groups in society or that it seeks to impose an exclusive ideology. Democracy is the way to mediate the various social interests in a particular community. In the international community, it is the way to promote the participation of all actors and to provide a possibility to solve conflicts by dialogue rather than by force of arms. The process of democratization internationally can therefore help promote peaceful relations among States.

65. With participation, economic and social development become meaningful and establish deeper roots. Building democratic institutions at the State level helps to ensure that the priorities of diverse social groups are considered in the formulation of development strategies. In the international economic system, democracy can mean that the relationship between developed and developing States is one not of assistance but of cooperation. Instead of chronic reliance on emergency relief, the concerns of developed and developing States can be mediated in conferences and other United Nations intergovernmental

consultations, which also engage relevant non-State actors. Democratization, therefore, can help guarantee that, through the United Nations, the poorest countries will have an ever growing voice in the international system. It can help ensure that the international system does not leave a vast portion of the world to fend for itself but truly promotes the integration and participation of all peoples.

66. If democratization is the most reliable way to legitimize and improve national governance, it is also the most reliable way to legitimize and improve international organization, making it more open and responsive by increasing participation, more efficient by allowing for burden-sharing and more effective by allowing for comparative advantage and greater creativity. Moreover, just like democratization within States, democratization at the international level is based on and aims to promote the dignity and worth of the individual human being and the fundamental equality of all persons and of all peoples.

67. The new world environment has strengthened this fundamental link between democratization nationally and internationally. Once, decision-making in global affairs could have only a limited effect on the internal affairs of States and the daily lives of their peoples. Today, decisions concerning global matters carry with them far-reaching domestic consequences, blurring the lines between international and domestic policy. In this way, unrepresentative decisions on global issues can run counter to democratization within a State and undermine a people's commitment to it. Thus, democratization within States may fail to take root unless democratization extends to the international arena.

68. Decisions at the global level are going to increase because the problems which can only be solved globally are going to multiply. Already, States everywhere increasingly confront forces far beyond the control of any one State or even group of States. Some of these forces are irresistible, such as the globalization of economic activity and communications. These forces, although predominantly positive in effect, affect societies unevenly, can seem accountable to no one and are creating opportunities for a host of transnational criminal activities, from illegal arms transfers to the laundering of profits from the narcotic trade. Environmental pressures are similarly irresistible and create global problems. States can also be substantially affected by another State's domestic decisions in regard to finance or the environment and by the decisions of local authorities and private actors. It is not the forces themselves that are new but their increasing scale and level of influence upon the State.

69. These global forces can feed and interact with forces exerted upon States from below. Increased access to communications media, particularly radio, television and film, raise awareness of problems and opportunities and lead people everywhere to demand more accountability, more representation and more participation in governance - more control over their future and more say in the decisions that affect their lives. Global forces can also be a source of individual insecurity, social disarray and dangerous fragmentation, creating fertile ground for fanaticism, ethnocentrism and isolationism.

70. All this means that the requirements of political governance are extending beyond State borders, even as States feel new pressures from below. Democracy

within the State will diminish in importance if the process of democratization does not move forward at the international level. For if a State today is to acquire or retain the capacity to provide an enabling environment for its citizens, it must extend its influence to those factors beyond its unilateral control which help to determine the conditions of life within it. Such an extension of sovereignty will be possible and legitimate only to the extent that it rests upon mechanisms of democratic accountability. For all States, democratization at the international level has become an indispensable mechanism for global problem-solving in a way that is accountable and acceptable to all and with the participation of all concerned. Dominance by one country or group of countries must over time evolve into a democratic international system in which all countries can participate, along with new non-State actors involved in international affairs.

71. There are signs that such a process is already taking place. As States have confronted popular demands to deal with economic, security and environmental issues that evade effective action on a strictly national basis, they have increasingly found themselves seeking solutions through cooperative arrangements and participation in regional and international intergovernmental organizations. Such organizations are proliferating and the scope of their activities is broadening, thereby fostering democratic principles and participation at the international level. At the same time, new channels of political expression and activity for individual citizens are developing outside governmental structures but inside the public sphere once considered the virtually exclusive province of government; the proliferation of non-governmental organizations from the local to the global and the expansion of activity through international political associations, or "political internationals", both make clear the deficiencies of existing governmental structures in the face of global change. The overall result is that globalization is creating chains of interlocking decisions and political associations which link different levels of political representation. In other words, what is emerging are de facto linkages extending from individual citizens all the way to international organizations, grappling with global problems and prospects. The forces at work in the world today are thus demanding and enabling an unprecedented democratization of international politics and decision-making.

72. The United Nations has recognized and supported this process of democratization internationally. Its advancement deserves to become a leading priority in world affairs. But before discussing how the United Nations and others can further this process, it is essential to be clear about the nature of the political "system" that is to be democratized.

73. The "system" in which the world operates is by its very name "international". However, as observed above, the States which are its basic components increasingly must operate in the midst of global as well as internal forces. Moreover, "international relations" - not relations among nations but relations among sovereign States - are increasingly shaped not only by the States themselves but also by an expanding array of non-State actors on the "international" scene, ranging all the way from individual persons to civic associations, non-governmental organizations, local authorities, private

multinational business, academia, the media, parliamentarians and regional and international intergovernmental organizations.

74. These changes have come to the fore largely because of the quick succession of historical events which the world has witnessed in recent years. The fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the cold war and of East-West antagonism shattered the ideological screen which concealed the complex reality of international relations and precipitated the collapse of the bipolar system. Although reference is commonly made to the "international system", in reality a new international system, with a new structure for international stability and cooperation, has yet to emerge. The most legitimate, effective and responsive way to build such a system - taking into account not only geopolitical issues, but economic behaviour and social and cultural aspirations - is by democratizing the structures and mechanisms already in place.

Member States

75. The first priority in this effort must be a fundamental change on the part of the Member States themselves. Despite all the pressures affecting State sovereignty in our time, the concept of sovereignty remains essential for rendering unequal power equal and for making international organization possible; States remain the most important actors of all, and will continue to be the fundamental building blocks of the international system. Yet today only a small proportion of States play their full role on the world stage. Some States, small in size or population, exercise influence far beyond their objective attributes of power. Other States possessing vast power refrain from international involvement commensurate with their strength. Of course, domestic political and constitutional constraints are involved, but the first and greatest step forward in democratization internationally must be increased attention to and engagement with international affairs by all States Members of the United Nations, as an application of the concept of sovereignty.

76. With this step must come a commitment on the part of all States not only to engage in dialogue and debate but also to discourage isolationism, to oppose unilateralism, to accept decisions reached democratically, to refrain from using force illegitimately, to oppose aggression, to promote and respect the rule of law in international relations and to maintain a general spirit of solidarity, cooperation and community. Unless the majority of Member States have the political will to pay attention to global affairs as they do to national affairs, the democratization of international relations will not succeed.

New actors

77. Next is the integration of new non-State actors, who are undeniably of increasing influence in world affairs, into existing international structures and mechanisms. There is a great diversity of such actors. They participate in different ways and in different degrees, more effectively within organizations and associations. The vast majority are in the North, and among them are the key actors in the process of globalization: the transnational entities involved in business and finance, which can cooperate closely with the Governments of the

countries in which they are based. The degree and nature of the loss of sovereignty brought on by globalization therefore differs between the States of the North and the States of the South. Increasing the participation of the new actors in international institutions must not be allowed to accentuate the gap between North and South. Just as democratization within a State must include an effort to empower citizens to participate in their own political process, so must democratization internationally include an effort to empower all States - developed or developing, North or South, rich or poor - to participate in the international political system, of which they are all a part.

78. The United Nations is fundamentally and from its inception an Organization of sovereign States. Yet it also has from its inception offered its Member States an indispensable mechanism for cooperation with actors, both governmental and non-governmental, functioning outside the United Nations. The creation in 1945 of an international intergovernmental Organization with provisions for cooperating not only with other such organizations - such as the specialized agencies formally brought into the United Nations system under the aegis of Article 57 of the Charter - but also with regional and non-governmental organizations, was a major achievement. Specifically, Chapter VIII of the Charter is devoted entirely to United Nations cooperation with regional organizations and arrangements in the maintenance of international peace and security. Article 71 of the Charter empowers the Economic and Social Council to make arrangements for consultation with non-governmental organizations active in its area of competence.

79. Within these provisions and the general framework of the Charter, the United Nations has made great strides in expanding dialogue and practical cooperation with the new actors as their influence on and importance to world affairs has grown. Nonetheless, the discussions on United Nations reform have not dealt adequately with the issue of their integration. It is crucial that in the future they do. Towards this end, the paragraphs below address several of the new actors in turn, outlining the special features which make their integration essential, their present level of involvement in the United Nations and its work, and suggestions to stimulate discussion on the question of their integration into the formal United Nations system. The suggestions touch upon a variety of steps towards deeper integration that could be taken by the United Nations Secretariat, by Member States, either individually or through the intergovernmental machinery of the United Nations, by the actor in question or, most often, by some combination of the aforementioned, acting jointly. Substantively, the steps primarily fall along three main lines, each of which stresses integration as a way to give the new actors a voice in the United Nations: a voice that can be a contribution to problem-solving; a voice on matters before the United Nations, not limited to the situation of each actor; and an avenue of expression to the international community on the prospects, problems and requirements of the sectors that these actors represent.

Regional organizations

80. The upsurge in activity through regional organizations in the last decade, and especially since the end of the cold war, has challenged the community of States to develop the new regionalism not as a resurgent "spheres of influence" but as a healthy complement to internationalism. Moreover, at a time of

increasing demand but decreasing resources within the United Nations for international action, the potential of regional groups to contribute political, diplomatic, financial, material and military resources has taken on even greater importance. Especially in the area of international development assistance and cooperation, where donor fatigue and indifference have set in, and in peace-enforcement, where the United Nations at present has no capacity, regional groups are for the United Nations increasingly important potential partners whose cooperation could be engaged.

81. Many regional intergovernmental organizations participate as permanent observers in the sessions and work of the General Assembly. Regional groups have long cooperated with the United Nations in the development field through the United Nations regional economic and social commissions, established in the earliest years of the Organization. Only in the vastly changed circumstances of the post-cold-war years has the United Nations been able to explore new forms of cooperation with regional groups in the maintenance of international peace and security and to delegate responsibility in particular cases to States and organizations of the regions concerned. Under the flexible framework provided by Chapter VIII of the Charter, different forms of United Nations/regional cooperation have developed: consultations, diplomatic support, operational support, co-deployment and joint operations. In August 1994 and again in February 1996, I convened at United Nations Headquarters a high-level meeting with regional organizations that have cooperated with the United Nations in peace and security, to examine patterns of and principles for improving cooperation, and to explore the potential for expanded cooperation in the future.

82. The integration of regional organizations into the United Nations system is a cornerstone of democratization internationally. To build upon this basis, consideration should be given to holding regular meetings at United Nations Headquarters every year or every two years between the Secretariat and regional organizations cooperating with the United Nations in peace and security. The pivotal role of regional organizations in democratizing development should be enhanced by opening channels to the regional level for the views of those at the local level, and by reducing bureaucratic obstacles to the flow or volume of assistance; the United Nations regional economic and social commissions are well placed to contribute to such an effort. Regionalism should be strengthened internationally through United Nations-sponsored agreements on horizontal, interregional connections in all areas of endeavour.

Non-governmental organizations

83. In the last few decades the number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) has grown at an astonishing rate - the number of international non-governmental organizations alone having risen from roughly 1,300 in 1960 to over 36,000 in 1995 - and their functional scope has expanded considerably. The thousands of NGOs that operate today, from the grass-roots to the global level, represent a wide diversity in size, statute, field of activity, methods, means and objectives. However, all are self-governing, private institutions engaged in the pursuit of public purposes outside the formal apparatus of the State. Such organizations are taking on an increasingly important role in world affairs by carrying the voices and needs of the smallest communities to international

attention, forging contacts between citizens' groups across the world and offering citizens direct channels of participation in world affairs. To international organizations, non-governmental organizations can bring not only strengthened legitimacy but also field experience and expertise across a vast array of human concerns, as well as a valuable capacity for information-gathering and dissemination. Non-governmental organizations are proving extremely powerful in fighting isolationism and indifference among both Governments and citizens, and in mobilizing public opinion and support, especially financial support and donor assistance.

84. Some 200 non-governmental organizations were present at the 1945 United Nations Conference on International Organization at San Francisco, where the Charter of the United Nations was agreed and signed. Since that time, the United Nations-NGO partnership has grown into a global network, encompassing some 1,600 non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council under Article 71 of the Charter, some 1,500 associated with the United Nations Department of Public Information, and the many other non-governmental organizations affiliated with United Nations offices and agencies in every part of the world. On the legislative/policy-making side, NGO participation in United Nations work is most advanced in the human rights and treaty bodies, with NGO involvement also having been critical to the establishment of those bodies. Less advanced but moving definitively forward is NGO participation in legislation and policy-making in the economic and social field. Recognizing the vital role played by non-governmental organizations at the Earth Summit (Rio de Janeiro, June 1992), the Programme of Action adopted there, Agenda 21,[16] provides for NGO participation in the Commission on Sustainable Development established for its follow-up. Agenda 21 encourages the entire United Nations system and all intergovernmental organizations to review and report on ways of enhancing NGO participation in policy design, decision-making, implementation and evaluation. The momentum generated by Rio for strengthened NGO participation has been carried forward in subsequent conferences and led, among other outcomes, to the adoption by the Economic and Social Council in July 1996 of a new resolution on the consultative relationship between the United Nations and non-governmental organizations.[17] On the operational level, NGO participation is most advanced in humanitarian emergencies, but it is also substantial in the development field, where NGO participation is facilitated by the United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service at Geneva and by various NGO committees and advisory bodies established by United Nations departments and agencies.

85. To deepen further the democratizing potential of the NGO phenomenon, non-governmental organizations and other representatives of civil society (including those addressed specifically below) should be invited to participate in Member State delegations on a regular basis. The Open-ended High-level Working Group on the Strengthening of the United Nations System has suggested that consideration be given to the establishment of a "civil society forum". In addition, the Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations in Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council should be empowered to make more precise and operational recommendations for the consideration of the Council and to help ensure that the non-governmental organizations in such status are representative and of recognized utility.

86. Each of the actors discussed below is already represented in some way through non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council. Therefore, participation via the Economic and Social Council should deepen on all fronts if these actors obtain some formalized or semi-formalized connection with the Council.

Parliamentarians

87. Parliamentarians, as the directly elected representatives of their constituents, are for international organizations an essential link to international public opinion. Without such a link it has become extremely difficult to build recognition, understanding and support for international efforts, especially in recent years as those efforts have become more complex and the international environment more uncertain. At the same time, by carrying the views and concerns of their constituents to the international arena, parliamentarians offer a direct channel for increasing the legitimacy, responsiveness and effectiveness of international organizations. Situated between citizens of States and the community of States, and by definition committed to dialogue, discussion and agreement, parliamentarians are a direct and motive force for democratization at the international level.

88. Parliamentarians have participated in the work of the United Nations in a variety of ways. Acting both individually and in concert, they have cooperated with the United Nations in the field across the full range of support for democratization. At the United Nations, they have engaged in informal consultations with the Secretariat, participated in Member State delegations, contributed to preparations for international conferences and fostered international dialogue by occasionally convening their own conferences at the United Nations through the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the world organization of parliamentarians. The Inter-Parliamentary Union has long had consultative status with the Economic and Social Council. Following a request of the General Assembly in its resolution 50/15 of 15 November 1995, I concluded in July 1996 an agreement on cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union[18] which will strengthen that cooperation and give it "a new and adequate framework". As Secretary-General, I also continue to meet with parliamentarians and members of state legislatures, upon their request, during my official visits to Member States, as do my Special Envoys and Special Representatives and other representatives of the United Nations system.

89. To consolidate and take further advantage of the contributions of parliamentarians as a factor of democratization internationally, Member States should consider: encouraging and facilitating the closer involvement of parliamentarians in United Nations efforts to provide international support for democratization within States; establishing a continuing committee or commission on the United Nations within their national parliaments; and urging the Inter-Parliamentary Union to convene every three years at a United Nations location in order to foster international dialogue and debate on the United Nations and issues before the United Nations and its Member States.

Local authorities

90. While today's major challenges are undeniably global in character, it is at the local level where their impact is felt most directly, which is why local authorities, such as mayors and metropolitan officials, have become notably more active on global issues and, in some cases, collectively organized across countries on matters of common concern. Local participation enhances the legitimacy and effectiveness of global decisions by helping to ensure that those decisions emerge from the realities of local life and are supported by local action. Yet vigorous and effective local governance is essential not only to global problem-solving: by contributing to health and sustainable human settlements, it is also essential to international peace and security in the broadest sense. With the global trend towards urbanization, human settlements increasingly will be urban settlements. Already, the city is where global problems converge and where their interconnections are most apparent; mass migration, overpopulation, natural disasters, air and water pollution, land degradation, the rights of women and children, minority rights, unemployment, poverty and social disaffection are just some of the prime examples. At the same time, however, the city may also be the place where a sound basis for solving these problems can be built, for of all human settlements, cities are best placed to foster dialogue and diversity, to engender community and a spirit of civic engagement while also opening windows to the world. Mayors and metropolitan authorities have therefore become indispensable agents for social integration within and among cities and thus within and among States.

91. Since the Earth Summit, where local authorities were identified as one of the "major groups" of society responsible for sustainable development, the involvement of local authorities in United Nations efforts has advanced considerably. Following the Summit, a Local Agenda 21 initiative was launched by the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives, whose members are cities and towns actively promoting participatory development processes at the local level. Mayors and metropolitan authorities participate in the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development and many exchange information and consult informally with the Commission's secretariat. Mayors and metropolitan authorities have also mobilized in support of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and contribute to its Conference of Parties. The organizational framework for the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) allowed for a more formalized involvement of local authorities. In the area of operational activities for development, programmes requested by Member States increasingly involve United Nations cooperation with local authorities. In the peace and security sphere, many local authorities support United Nations efforts through "sister cities" and other such cooperation and cultural exchange programmes, and many cities have declared themselves nuclear-weapon-free zones. Cities have also been strongly supportive of the United Nations by hosting international gatherings and events and by providing homes to the many United Nations offices around the world.

92. To strengthen local frameworks for global problem-solving and deepen the involvement of local authorities in the United Nations system, consideration should be given to instructing United Nations resident coordinators to maintain regular dialogue with local authorities, making the interaction an integral part of the work, at the country level, on operational activities for development.

The possibility of establishing a joint committee of concerned Secretariat entities and apex organizations of local authorities should be examined; such a committee would serve to raise awareness and promote exchange of experiences among local authorities and could be established along the lines of the Committee for the Promotion and Advancement of Cooperatives, which brings together the United Nations Secretariat, United Nations agencies and international non-governmental organizations to promote and coordinate assistance to cooperatives and is financed by contributions from its members. Member States should also consider a more formalized involvement of local authorities through the establishment of a small subsidiary body of the Commission on Sustainable Development, which would contribute regularly to the work of the Commission and to other relevant United Nations bodies.

Academia

93. At this time of profound change, academia, including universities, research institutes and public policy centres, has taken on increased importance in world affairs by helping to uncover the dimensions of change and to construct an intellectual platform upon which future efforts may be built. By expanding the flow of ideas, academia has become increasingly powerful in encouraging public participation in national and international dialogue on the future and, more importantly, in shaping that dialogue. Thus, by its very nature, academia also contributes to democratization. At the same time, academia is providing important new evidence on the complementarity among peace, development and democracy, and on the contribution of international organizations to all three.

94. Many academic groups have engaged in informal consultations with the Secretariat and United Nations departments, agencies and programmes. They have also participated in practical assistance programmes. The United Nations itself has several research centres and institutes, as well as its own United Nations University, which promotes scholarly debate, research and training across the range of issues relevant to the operation and efforts of international organizations. The Academic Council on the United Nations System, established by scholars, teachers and practitioners from around the world active in the work and study of international organizations, fosters dialogue and cooperation between academia and the various components of the United Nations system.

95. To enable the widest range of the world's peoples to benefit from advances in thought and research, and to give greater recognition to the views and needs of academic institutions and enterprises, consideration should be given to expanding informal consultations with academia across the United Nations system in order to facilitate the contribution of individual scholars, scientists and research institutions to United Nations projects and problem-solving. Integrating the programme of work of the United Nations University with the overall work of the United Nations system would be an important contribution towards that end, as would the inclusion by the periodic conferences of academic disciplines of panels or programmes involving United Nations practitioners. The United Nations University and its subsidiary institutions should be strengthened to forge stronger links between academics and research institutions in the North and the South, with a view to fostering global networks where this might not otherwise be easily accomplished. Member States should consider offering a United Nations centre as the venue for academic gatherings to discuss the

problems and prospects of research universities and institutions related to the work of that centre. These could serve both substantive scholarship and the capacity of academia to play a more direct role in world affairs.

Business and industry

96. Business and industry today has more power over the future of the global economy and the environment than any Government or organization of Governments. The cooperation of business and industry, whether informal producers, small or medium-sized enterprises or large-scale corporations, is critical to the achievement of development that is both socially and environmentally sustainable. Transnational or multinational corporations in particular - which are today estimated to be 40,000 in number, controlling some 250,000 foreign affiliates worth approximately $2.6 trillion in book value and accounting for some one third of world private-sector productive assets - are playing an extremely important role in economic development. This occurs not only through foreign direct investment in transitional and developing economies but also through the transfer of technology and skills and the stimulation of host country business enterprise. Moreover, and most importantly, by increasingly integrating the various functions of production across State borders, and as the world's main investors, traders, transferrers of technology and movers of people across borders, transnational corporations are today driving the emergence of an integrated international production system. A development agent and a positive factor for social integration within and among States, the private business sector - especially transnational business - must be recognized as an integral player in international organization and more closely involved in international decision-making.

97. While business and industry has become increasingly important for shaping the world economy, the United Nations has become increasingly important for shaping the environment in which business and industry operates. United Nations efforts for peace help to maintain a stable environment in which business and industry can flourish. Less well known is the significant role played by the United Nations system in establishing the regulatory framework in which business and industry acts internationally. This is done, for example, by the World Trade Organization in trade and intellectual property rights, by the International Monetary Fund in financial transactions and by the United Nations Environment Programme, the International Labour Organization and many other United Nations programmes and specialized agencies. United Nations entities also set industry guidelines and standards and offer policy analysis and technical assistance to Member States in improving their business and industry-related policies, infrastructure and institutional framework. While United Nations efforts having an important bearing on business are extensive, interaction between the two is at present sporadic, primarily informal and not reflective of the influential role that has been achieved by business and industry in international affairs. The only major exception to this is the International Labour Organization, which brings together in its General Conference Member States represented by delegates from government, employers and workers, each of which are entitled to vote individually on all matters. The need and, in today's more open and increasingly globalized environment, the possibility now exists to transform the role of business and industry within the United Nations into that of an active partnership in pursuit of common

objectives. In this regard, the role played by business and industry at the Earth Summit and its continuing participation in the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development are foundations upon which to build. The same can be said of the pioneering efforts under way towards linking international organizations, both governmental and non-governmental, with national and private multinational banks in order to provide the funds and services which small and medium-sized entrepreneurs in transitional and developing countries require for sustainable development activities.

98. To further the widest possible mutually beneficial involvement of business and industry in the work of the United Nations, consideration should be given to establishing both a roster of United Nations technical and managerial personnel for temporary assignment to business and industry and a roster of business and industry executives and technical personnel for United Nations technical assistance activities. The effort to build the latter roster could be made in conjunction with an initiative to expand the United Nations Volunteers programme to encourage business and industry executives to engage in United Nations work and, inter alia, to join in early-stage planning for post-conflict peace-building, with the aim of encouraging foreign investment to facilitate recovery and reconstruction. Member States should also explore the expansion of the tripartite representational structure of the International Labour Organization to other parts of the United Nations system. Also to be considered is the expansion of United Nations efforts to achieve agreement on key issues required for a favourable environment for business, such as uniform commercial codes and intellectual property and accounting standards, and to deal with transnational problems, such as crime and corruption, which inhibit both good governance and good business.

The media

99. Responsible and independent global communications media can engage Governments and people in global affairs and enable them to be informed, to discuss and debate, and to express positions on the issues of the day. In this way, the global communications revolution and the global wave of democratization are mutually reinforcing: a free press is a vehicle for democratization; democratization promotes the open society in which a free press can flourish. However, in this age of instant information and near total communication, the media have become not only the major venue for dialogue and debate within and among States, but also, definitively, an international actor with a distinct role on the international stage. The media can help keep international politics open, responsive and accountable. Without that essential link to the world public, organizations such as the United Nations would be nothing more than forums for the mutual mutterings of national and international bureaucracies. At the same time, the media itself, especially through the immensely powerful imagery of television and film, have the ability to set the terms of international debate and to shape world public opinion. Through the issues, peoples and places they choose to highlight - or to ignore - the media today have enormous influence over the international agenda. If this influence is to be constructive and effective, the media must focus not only on the drama of conflict and confrontation in certain areas of the world, but on the global pattern of violence and the broader economic, social, political and humanitarian issues that dominate the international community's long-term agenda.

100. The United Nations has an obligation to protect the independence and freedom of news organizations and to defend the right of all peoples, as set out in article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,[19] to the freedom of opinion and expression, including the freedom "to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers". The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), along with various news organizations, has endorsed a Charter for a Free Press, committed to the unfettered flow of news and information both within and across national borders. Through UNESCO, the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat and various other entities, the United Nations offers its Member States support for the development of free, responsible and independent communications media. While striving to promote responsible and independent communications media worldwide, the United Nations also endeavours, without intruding on that independence, to engage the cooperation of the media by making information about the United Nations and its work easily accessible to the media, and through it, to non-governmental organizations and the public at large.

101. While the media are a powerful force for democratization, efforts to involve them closely with the international system would contravene their highest principles of independence and objectivity. At the same time, however, thought should be given to the many issues which have arisen with the vast new role of the media in global affairs, issues which affect not only people, cultures and Governments but the media themselves. Among steps to be considered could be: endeavours by the United Nations and its Member States to offer greater transparency and access to world media; strengthening the information capacity of United Nations operations to help focus media interest and attention on international problems at risk of international neglect; and consideration by the General Assembly's Committee on Information of the establishment of a forum where members of the media, if they choose, and without compromising their independence, could report to the international community on the state of the media.

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102. Integrating these new actors into the daily practice of international politics and decision-making will not be a simple task. In some cases, where involvement is relatively limited and where the actor is of a most private nature, the path towards deeper integration may not at this time be clear. But whether or not Member States confront this challenge, these new actors will continue to influence the shape of the new international system as it emerges through the gradual construction of new rules and procedures. Only a concerted effort to take account of these actors will pave the way for the major structural changes now being contemplated.

103. The benefits of such an approach to reform are seen most clearly in the United Nations practice of convening special international conferences and summits. By organizing such gatherings, the United Nations has created issue-based constituencies and provided conditions under which declarations are being reached that are akin to general referendums on transnational issues. The democratic nature of these conferences contributes to the legitimacy and effectiveness of the programmes of action they are producing. Through the

series of global conferences on interlocking economic and social issues, the United Nations has been providing an ongoing democratic process through which a new international consensus on and framework for development can be built. The process has given new direction to the reform and strengthening of the United Nations development machinery, which has advanced considerably, particularly in the past year. This makes manifest the critical relationship between engaging with the new actors on the international scene and reforming the architecture for international relations, the third step in promoting democratization internationally.

The architecture of the United Nations

104. By promoting democratization within its own architecture, the United Nations, as the world's largest and most inclusive organization of Governments, can make a major contribution to democratization at the international level. Since entering office, I have made democratization a guiding objective of Secretariat reform, as evidenced, for example, in the decentralization of decision-making that has already been enacted.

105. This reform needs to be advanced by reform in the United Nations intergovernmental machinery, for which democratization can also serve as a guiding objective. There is a clear need to move towards intergovernmental machinery that is less fragmented, better able to affect global forces and more open to civil society. There is also a clear need for an Organization in which all principal organs function in the balance and harmony contemplated by the Charter. This means an Organization which operates more consistently at the political level, with a clear sense of its comparative advantages and priorities, conscious of the linkages among all dimensions of its mission, and equipped with mandates and resources that are effectively matched.

106. The General Assembly is the embodiment of the United Nations universality and the cornerstone of representation and participation within the United Nations system, today bringing together 185 Member States on the basis of sovereign equality and democratic principles, along with several permanent observers. Improvements in the functioning of the Assembly have been a major focus of the Open-ended High-level Working Group on the Strengthening of the United Nations System. I see the Assembly performing on a continuing basis the role that the special international conferences have been playing in recent years, addressing comprehensively, and at the highest political level, the major global issues facing the international community, and fostering national and international commitments. Each session on a particular theme could consolidate and follow through on earlier meetings and set the agenda for work that lies ahead. The Assembly's role should be one of synthesis and overall policy assessment and coordination vis-à-vis the membership as well as the United Nations system.

107. The strengthening of the Economic and Social Council has been a long-standing item on the reform agenda. It received special attention in the Halifax Summit Communiqué of the Group of Seven major industrialized nations in June 1995[20] and has been considered over the past few years by two working groups. The General Assembly has acted, in its resolution 50/227 of

24 May 1996, to reinforce significantly the coordinating role of the Economic and Social Council. Equally important, in the resolution the General Assembly also instructed the Council to undertake further reviews of its functional and regional commissions and its expert groups. The resolution thus set the stage not only for greater balance in the functioning of the Assembly and the Council, but also for a further streamlining and strengthening of the intergovernmental machinery in the economic and social field. With a view towards the continuing revitalization of the Economic and Social Council, I see three priority requirements: more regular and formalized participation in the work of the Council by the new actors on the global scene; ministerial participation, and increasing involvement of the new actors, in the high-level segment; and a decision to bring the reforms initiated so far in relation to operational activities a step further, so as to enable the Economic and Social Council to exercise an effective role of governance over all the operational funds and programmes of the Organization.

108. Enhancing the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council should help to correct the growing imbalance in the functioning, responsibilities and authority of those organs and of the Security Council. At the same time, the new international environment and the marked expansion in the level and scope of Security Council activity call for the reform of its membership, procedure and working methods, towards a more efficient, representative and open body.

109. The question of Security Council reform is the focus of ongoing debate in the General Assembly through its working group on the matter and other Council-related issues.[21] Member States have welcomed the positive steps taken thus far to improve the flow of information between the Council and the membership at large and to increase the participation of States not members of the Council, especially troop-contributing countries, in Council debates. Progress on the more complex and difficult issue of Security Council membership and voting procedures has been slow. However, the reports of the working group and the remarks made during the Special Commemorative Meeting of the General Assembly, held from 22 to 24 October 1995, reveal an emerging consensus on a number of important points. Most Member States seem to concur that the present size and composition of the Security Council are no longer representative of the general membership of the United Nations or of geopolitical realities. Bearing in mind the need for manageability, most also seem to agree that more effective, equitable and representative participation in the Security Council could be achieved by increasing the overall number of its seats. Once full consensus is reached, the question will ultimately be resolved by the Member States through the processes set out in the Charter, as in 1965 when the membership of the Council was expanded from 11 to 15 by Charter amendment and the minimum number of votes needed for the Council to act was raised from 7 to 9.

110. The vision and the will required to bring about the changes currently being contemplated concerning the composition, the procedure and the working methods of the Security Council will not be easy to achieve, as balancing capacity to contribute with geo-political representation will be one of the most difficult obstacles to overcome, but transformation in some form may become essential for the future success of the Council and for the Organization itself. The achievement of those changes would be a major contribution to the realization of

a United Nations Organization in which each element plays its full and proper role.

111. A fundamental part of this effort must be to encourage and facilitate the use of the International Court of Justice. The Charter envisions the Court as an integral component of the peacemaking apparatus of the United Nations as a whole, through its roles in arbitration and the peaceful settlement of disputes. In this regard, the establishment by the Security Council in 1994 of a United Nations Observer Group to monitor, at the request of the parties, the implementation of the Court's judgment in the case concerning the Territorial Dispute (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya/Chad),[22] has created an impressive precedent, which shows much promise for international law and its functioning in an increasingly integrated United Nations system.

112. All Member States should accept the general jurisdiction of the Court without exception; where domestic constraints prevent this, States should provide a list of the matters they are willing to submit to the Court. The dispute settlement clauses of treaties should permit the exercise of the Court's jurisdiction. The Security Council, under Articles 36 and 37 of the Charter, can recommend that Member States submit disputes to the International Court of Justice. I have on several occasions urged that the Secretary-General be authorized by the General Assembly, pursuant to Article 96 of the Charter, to turn to the Court for advisory opinions, providing a legal dimension to his diplomatic efforts to resolve disputes. Beyond this, the General Assembly should not hesitate to draw upon that same Article in referring to the Court questions concerning the consistency of resolutions adopted by United Nations bodies with the Charter of the United Nations.

113. With the International Court of Justice as one of its principal organs, and as the world body of sovereign States, the United Nations provides the forum and the mechanism for the advancement of international law and jurisdiction. This aspect of United Nations endeavours deserves wider recognition and attention from its Member States, not least because international law is another essential aspect of the United Nations architecture which holds enormous potential for democratization at the international level. International law promotes mutual respect among States and peoples, provides a rigorous analytical framework for approaching problems of mutual concern and offers a powerful basis for multilateral action. As such, it is a powerful tool for democratization. At the same time, democratization internationally will strengthen respect for international law. Democratic processes are designed to accommodate diversity. Democratic processes at the international level therefore provide the best way to reconcile the different legal systems of States. With continued democratization internationally, one can contemplate the eventual creation of a common international legal system, not to replace national legal systems, but to serve in certain kinds of cases as a core institution of democratic cooperation within and among States.

114. The establishment of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, and the actions of the Security Council establishing international tribunals on war crimes committed in the former Yugoslavia and in Rwanda, are important steps towards the effective rule of law in international affairs. The next step must be the further expansion of international jurisdiction. The General Assembly in

1994 created an ad hoc committee to consider the establishment of a permanent international criminal court, based upon a report and draft statute prepared by the International Law Commission.[23] The Assembly has since established a preparatory committee to prepare a draft convention for such a court that could be considered at an international conference of plenipotentiaries.[24] This momentum must not be lost. The establishment of an international criminal court would be a monumental advance, affording, at last, genuine international jurisdictional protection to some of the world's major legal achievements. The benefits would be manifold, enforcing fundamental human rights and, through the prospect of enforcing individual criminal responsibility for grave international crimes, deterring their commission.

115. This area of United Nations activity, promoting democratization internationally, exemplifies the seamless connection between the United Nations roles in peace-building at the State level and in the maintenance of the international system. As is apparent in the diversity of new actors to be accounted for and in the changes in architecture to be addressed, this task of the United Nations has become increasingly complex in recent years. It amounts to nothing less than managing the construction of a new international system in an increasingly globalized environment, marked by a rapidly expanding array of non-State actors. It amounts to nothing less than peace-building at the international level, in the aftermath of the cold war.

VI. CONCLUSION: TOWARDS AN AGENDA FOR DEMOCRATIZATION

116. In June 1992, at the request of the Security Council, I issued "An Agenda for Peace",[25] in which I emphasized the need for a comprehensive approach to peace and security, incorporating preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peacekeeping and peace-building. I also drew the attention of the international community, in the report, to the reality that peace and development could no longer be regarded as separate undertakings.

117. In May 1994, at the request of the General Assembly, I produced a companion report to "An Agenda for Peace", entitled "An Agenda for Development",[26] in which I presented development as a multidimensional enterprise that involves far more than economic growth. Development efforts have to be guided by a new understanding of the different dimensions of development, one of which is democracy as good governance.

118. The present paper has been motivated by the evident desire for democratization, not only within States, but also among them and throughout the international system. It has been rooted in the conviction that peace, development and democracy are inextricably linked. While recognizing that the relations between these three great concepts remain a matter of controversy, this paper, in a sense, completes my reflections on "An Agenda for Peace" and "An Agenda for Development" and is offered in the hope it will motivate intensified international debate on the two agendas and contribute to the necessary construction of a third essential agenda, an agenda for democratization.

119. At the heart of this debate will be the difficult questions, raised by democratization, of prioritization and timing among peace, development and democracy, questions which have been a constant concern throughout this paper. In some cases, peace, development and democracy have been pursued simultaneously. Such was the case in Cambodia, El Salvador and Mozambique, where United Nations efforts in support of democratization served as a link between conflict resolution, on the one hand, and reconstruction and development, on the other.

120. In other cases, however, the joint pursuit of these goals has proved more difficult than expected, at times contributing to political instability, social disarray and economic disappointment. These experiences have brought to the fore the main question of prioritization: whether democratization requires as a precondition the achievement within a nation of a certain level of peace and development.

121. Peace can be seen as essential, for without some degree of peace, neither development nor democracy is possible. Yet both development and democracy are essential if peace is to endure. The articulation between development and democracy is more complex. Experience has shown that development can take place without democracy. However, there is little to suggest that development requires an authoritarian regime and much to suggest that, over the long term, democracy is an essential ingredient for sustainable development. At the same time, development is an essential ingredient for true democracy so that, beyond

formal equality, all members of society are empowered to participate in their own political system.

122. The present paper does not pretend to provide an easy answer to the questions of prioritization and timing that have arisen with the new wave of democratization. Rather, it seeks, by drawing out the lessons of experience, to help shape a platform of understanding upon which solutions can be built. Foremost among these lessons is that there is no one model of democratization or democracy suitable to all societies. The path adopted by each society depends upon its historical circumstances, economic situation, and the political will and commitment of its members.

123. Realism imposes prioritization upon States. Each State must be free to determine for itself its priorities for the welfare of its people. This prioritization, however, should only be applied over the short term and cannot serve States as a pretext for the neglect of any one of the three objectives of peace, development and democracy.

124. Given the potential dangers of democratization, a cautious approach is understandable and, in fact, necessary. However, with this caution must come the crucial recognition that these dangers can be reduced. Lessons learned about democratization over the past few years suggest ways in which democratization can be undertaken more safely and effectively, and more certainly advanced. Democratization requires a comprehensive approach, addressing not only the holding of free and fair elections, but also the construction of a political culture of democracy and the development and maintenance of institutions to support the ongoing practice of democratic politics. Democratization must seek to achieve a balance between the institutions of the State and the institutions of civil society. In order to succeed over time, democratization within States must also be supported by a process of democratization among States and throughout the international system.

125. Democratization internationally brings with it its own set of problems of prioritization and timing. Democratization internationally, as this paper has sought to show, can be a contribution to peace and development. However, there is a concern that international efforts to deal with the outbreak of conflict may detract attention and resources away from development cooperation and democratization support. Between development and democratization the articulation is, here again, more complex. Democratization internationally can serve the cause of social equity and be a powerful tool for addressing the alarming socio-economic gap between North and South. At the same time, however, democratization internationally may itself require the reduction of the North-South gap, so that all States are empowered to participate in the international political system, to which they all belong. This latter concern goes beyond the question of resources available for State participation. If democratization internationally is to include the increased participation of new non-State actors, the fact that the vast majority of these actors today come from the North must be considered.

126. With its global mandate and as the world's most inclusive global forum, the United Nations role in democratization is, in a sense, to help States and the international community deal with the questions of prioritization and timing as

they arise both nationally and internationally. Through the United Nations, the three great goals of peace, development and democracy can receive the comprehensive treatment they deserve.

127. The United Nations project in democratic international organization, begun some 50 years ago, has gained new momentum. Yet significant obstacles remain. The disruptions and distortions of recent decades must be overcome. The original understandings of 1945 must be restored and hard-won wisdom readily applied. Disillusion created by the manifest difficulties of creating a new international system must be surmounted. The wave of democratization must be seen in its full context, as a movement of global extent and requiring integration of all levels of world affairs.

128. While democratization must take place at all levels of human society - local, national, regional and global - the special power of democratization lies in its logic, which flows from the individual human person, the one irreducible entity in world affairs and the logical source of all human rights. At the same time that democratization will rely upon individual commitment to flourish, democratization will foster the conditions necessary for the individual to flourish. Beyond all the obstacles lie bright prospects for the future.

Notes

[1] Charter of the United Nations, Article 1, paragraph 1.

[2] Ibid., preamble.

[3] Ibid., Article 1, paragraph 2, and Article 55.

[4] Ibid., Article 1, paragraph 3, and Article 55.

[5] Ibid., Article 2, paragraph 1.

[6] General Assembly resolution 217 A (III).

[7] Ibid., article 21, para. 3.

[8] General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV).

[9] Ibid., article 2.

[10] Ibid., article 5.

[11] General Assembly resolution 2200 A (XXI).

[12] General Assembly resolution 48/131, para. 4.

[13] A/49/713, annex II.

[14] A/50/332.

[15] A/51/512.

[16] Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992, vol. I, Resolutions Adopted by the Conference (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex II.

[17] Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[18] A/51/402, annex.

[19] General Assembly resolution 217 A (III).

[20] A/50/254-S/1995/501, annex I, para. 36.

[21] Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council.

[22] I.C.J. Reports 1994, p. 6.

[23] See Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 10 (A/49/10), chap. II.B.I.

[24] See ibid., Fifty-first Session, Supplement No. 22, vols. I and II.

[25] A/47/277-S/24111.

[26] A/48/935.